THE GULF COAST BREEZE.

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A prominent bacteriologist states that scarcely one dog in 10,000 supposed to be mad in the sense that his bite will communicate hydrophobia is really so. A knowledge of this fact will cause a comparative feeling of security, but then a close lookout should be kept against the one dog.

Near Briancon, France, is the Alpine Glacier du Casset, which is now being regularly worked as an ice quarry, the product being shipped by rail to Paris. The ice vein is about one hundred feet wide and twenty-five thick, and it is found that it can be worked at a profit, making the first commercial use of the glacier so far known.

The total losses by fire during the past twenty-three years in the United States aggregate $2,454,592,481, on which there was insurance to the amount of $1,438,902,448. At the beginning of the period indicated, that is in 1875, the total annual loss averaged about sixty-five millions. The destruction of property by fire has therefore almost doubled since that date. It is hardly necessary to state that the increase of property during the period, although very great, bears no proportion to the loss.

Official tests of the eyesight of Baltimore school children—tests ordinarily used by oculists—to the number of 53,067 show some interesting and suggestive results. More than 9000 pupils were found to have such defects in these organs as to make school work unsafe, while fifty-three per cent. of the children were found not to be in the enjoyment of normal vision. Curiously enough, this percentage of defective eyesight steadily decreased with the age of the pupils. The percentage of normal vision was found to be as follows: First grade, 35; second, 41; third, 47; fourth, 49; fifth, 48; sixth, 48; seventh, 54; eighth, 56. No explanation is offered for this improvement in eyesight with age and the use of the eyes under school conditions. It was found, however, that many blackboards and maps in the schools were not placed in the proper light, and the report of the oculists recommends yearly examinations hereafter of the pupils' eyesight; also the adoption of a uniform system of adjustable seats and desks adapted to the heights of the children.

As far as the imports and exports of merchandise can be compared, the total foreign commerce of the United States for last year shows a remarkable increase. In fact, this year ending with June, has been the banner year in American foreign trade, which represents a larger aggregate volume than in any previous similar period of our commercial history. Figures show that the exports of the products and manufactures of the United States represent a total value of $1,200,000,000, while the imports will be but little more than half that sum. This gives a trade balance of nearly $600,000,000, or 100 per cent. in our favor for the year. While our imports are less in value than in any year since 1885, our exports are the largest ever recorded. While the greatest gain in our exports has naturally been in the products of our farms, it is very gratifying to know that there has been no falling off in the foreign demand for American manufactures, which, for the year just ended, constituted twenty-five per cent. of our total export trade. At the same time there has been a diminution in our purchases from forty-one per cent. of all imports a year ago down to thirty-seven per cent. for the year that terminated yesterday. Our combined import and export trade, now aggregating $1,800,000,000, places us in the second commercial position of the world, we having now passed both Germany and France, and following very close to the United Kingdom.

THE LADRONES AND CAROLINES.

Value and Beauty of These Much-Discussed Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

A QUEER PEOPLE WITH QUEERER CUSTOMS.

Far out in the Pacific, where the map looks as if a charge of bird shot had peppered a spot no larger than your thumb, the American flag is flying over the Ladrones. They are but specks on the face of the deep. Yet there is an empire of island wealth amid the rarest scenery in the world. An earthly paradise it is called.

The capture of the Ladrones by the United States with a seizure of the Carolines just to the south of the group makes them of new interest to Americans.

The Ladrones are a chain of volcanic islands extending north and south from latitude thirteen degrees twelve minutes north to latitude twenty degrees thirty-two minutes south and in longitude about 146 east. They were discovered by Magellan, March 6, 1521, and named Ladrones from the supposed stealing propensities of the natives. Later, in 1668, the islands were named Mariana, in honor of Maria Anne, of Austria, the widow of Phillip IV., King of Spain. The inhabited islands are Agrigan, Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Guam. On the other islands are volcanoes spouting fire and steam. The mountains range from 1000 to 3000 feet high, about the altitude of the biggest of the Catskills.

A LADRONE BELLE.

The Spaniards have controlled the islands without interference or serious trouble from the natives. There is a small garrison at Agana, the capital, where the Governor-General has resided. Many natives of the Caroline Islands have been imported into the Ladrones and the races are interestingly mixed. The blending of the tall, copper-colored, curly-haired, long-bearded and mustached Carolinians with the Philippian-looking Ladrones, with their dark Malay skin, has given a new tint to a large number of young men and women.

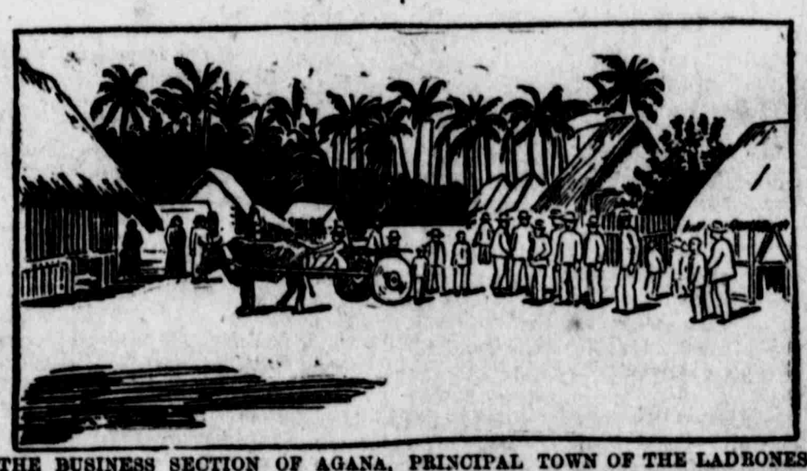
The chief products for sustaining life are cocoanuts and bread fruit. They grow spontaneously everywhere. It is said that one cocoanut tree will feed a man. A grove of the fruit trees to the islander is what a herd of cows is to the Pennsylvania farmer.

These, with the tons of fish in the lagoons, which are natural fish ponds, are responsible for the profound indolence of the natives. They can support life without laboring. Some of the bread fruit trees are ten or twelve feet in diameter. A single tree is considered equal in life-supporting capacity to two acres of wheat. Then there are other products—guava, corn, ordinary wheat, bananas, figs and arrowroot.

The islands forming the Ladrones, beginning at the northernmost, are Farallon de Pajaras, an active volcano 1000 feet in height; a group of three rocky islets known as the Urracas; Assumption, a partially active volcanic peak 2848 feet in height; Agrigan, seven miles in length, mountainous, and the northernmost inhabited island; Pagan, having three active cones, and peopled by a few natives; the uninhabited islands of Alamagan, Guguan, Sariguan, Anataxan and Farallon de Medinilla; Saipan, fifteen miles long, fertile, and having about 1000 inhabitants; Tinian, originally possessing 30,000 inhabitants, and now a place of segregation for lepers, with a population of 300; Aguijan, of no importance; Rota, with 500 inhabitants, and Guam.

Guam, or Guajan, the southernmost and largest of the islands, is thirty-two miles long and has a population of about 9000, two-thirds of whom are in Agana, and nearly all the rest upon the seaboard, the country inland being almost without inhabitant. Agana, the capital, is also a convict settlement. It is beautifully clean, and possesses good government officials, a hospital, schools and a church. The Spanish residents have usually numbered about twenty, and the regular soldiery about 200, all quartered here. The militia, comprising about all the male population, is commanded by native officers. The civil government is similar to that of the Philippines. Postal communication has been quarterly.

When first discovered the Ladrones had a population of about 60,000. Not one of the original race survives, and the islands are peopled chiefly by Tagals and Bisayans from the Philippines, mixed descendants of South American Indians, a colony of Caroline Islanders who founded Garapan in the Island of Saipan, and numerous Chamorro-Spanish half-breeds. The census of 1888 reports a population of 6476 in Agana; and a total of 10,172 in all the islands, 5034 being males 5138 females. There are eighteen schools in the Island of Guam. Only ten per cent. of the Ladrone Islanders are unable to read and write. Spanish is the recognized language; but many of the natives speak a little English. The climate is good and equable; seventy degrees to eighty degrees Fahrenheit is the range of the thermometer.



THE BUSINESS SECTION OF AGANA, PRINCIPAL TOWN OF THE LADRONES.

The present population are described as "wanting in energy, of indifferent moral character, and miserably poor." They are descended in part from the original inhabitants, called Chamonos, and from the Mestizos, a mixed race formed by the union of Spaniards with these natives.

On the island called Suypan a colony from the Caroline Islands, which lie to the south of the Ladrones, was established some years ago. These people are the most active and enterprising inhabitants of the Ladrones.

Spain has derived no revenue from these islands, and has done little to civilize the people. At one time a few small schools were started, but they were soon abandoned.

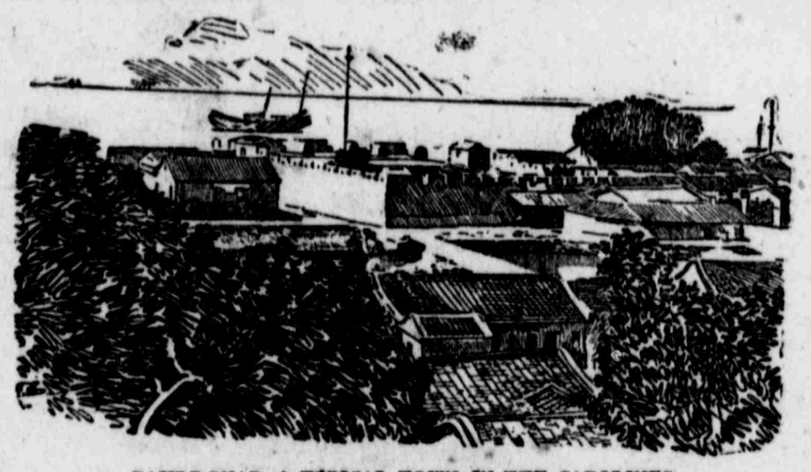
In 1856 an epidemic destroyed one-third of the population.

August and September are the hottest months, and the rain-fall in the summer months is very heavy.

NATIVES AND HUT IN THE LADRONES.

Agana, the capital, is well built of timber, and many of the houses have tiled roofs. There are twenty small villages on the islands.

So little has been done to civilize the people that they live in about the same primitive fashion as characterized them when Europeans first visited them.



BAHLDONAP, A TYPICAL TOWN IN THE CAROLINES.

In one thing the people of the Ladrones excel all the natives of the Polynesian islands—this is their faculty for building and sailing a wonderful water craft with a lateen sail. Sailors of all nations for over 300 years have admired their skill with these vessels.

They are built entirely without metal, and the largest of them will carry about seven men.

The boat has an outrigger which is carried on the lee side to prevent upsetting. It is said that these boats

A CAROLINE WARRIOR.

make wonderful speed, and that they can lie closer to the wind than any other sailing craft known.

Customs, superstitions, dress, religion, etc., prove that the people of the Ladrones have a common origin with the other races of Polynesia, but they have lived so long by themselves that they have a distinct language. Some writers have argued that the race is of American origin, while others hold that they are an offshoot of the Japanese.

Gobien, the French writer, who studies the people on the spot, says of them:

"The natives are not so dark as those of the Philippines, and are larger of body than the average European. They lived on roots, fish and fruits, and were extremely active and quick. Many of them lived over 100 years."

Another French writer says that he saw them dive and swim so well that they caught fish in their hands under water.

In character the Ladrones are gay and amiable, loving pleasure, and spending much of their time in outdoor amusements.

The women are usually lighter in color than the men, and many of them are extremely beautiful, with luxuriant hair reaching almost to the ground.

The Carolines are like the Ladrones, only more extensive in number and area, and densely populated. The islands are widely scattered into three great groups, the eastern, western and central. Spain originally claimed all the groups, but Germany recently took the Marshall Islands. The central or main group, now belonging to Spain, comprises forty-eight smaller groups, making a total of four or five hundred islands.

Among the products of the country are rice, corn, wheat, sugar, cotton, tobacco, indigo, bread fruit, castor oil and kindred necessaries of life. Among the curious natural features are the palm trees, that produce vegetable ivory; banyan trees that grow downward, the seeds being planted by birds high up in other trees, deposited in bark and crevices, sending down rootlets to gather sustenance and moisture from the soil.

Another tree bears a fruit so offensive in odor that no man not in practice can endure it, but once in a mouth the fruit tastes so deliciously that he cannot stop eating until it is devoured.

The women of the Carolines are neat and attractive at home or among their cocoanut trees. The men are industrious—everywhere displaying ingenuity and gentle thrift.

The Caroline Archipelago consists of thirty-six minor groups, of which the nine following are the principal: The Palaos or Pelews, Yap, Uluthi, Ulcai, Namonuito, Hogolen or Ruk, the East and West Mortlocks, Bonabe or Ponape, and Kusaie, otherwise called Ualan or Strong's Island.

The Pelew group contains some 200 islands and islets. The principal island is Bad-el-Thaob, which in area is equal to all the rest put together. The most important of the others are Korror, Uruk, Tapel, Malk, Peleleu and Angaur. The population of the Pelews is estimated at some 3000, but is probably much more. The language is a very peculiar and bizarre Malayan dialect, somewhat akin to that of Sulu Archipelago. The principal products are turtle shell, copra and beche de mer (Holothuria), which in the Chinese markets brings as much as $400 gold per ton.

There is always civil war going on in the group between the various tribes, and a firm hand is needed to keep things in order there. Captain Butran, of the Velasco (lately sunk at Manila), who visited the group in 1885, gives these natives a good name. Captain O'Keefe, however, a wealthy trader of Yap, gives them a doubtful reputation, putting them down as a folk of piratical and turbulent character.

The enormous quartz wheels, the famous and curious stone money of Yap in this group, were quarried in the Island of Kokial. In olden time there was great commercial activity here, and the Yap and Pelew folks went on extended voyages of trading and conquest. Bab-el-Thaob is rich in good timber. Great quantities of yams, bread-fruits and cocoanuts are grown. Alligators are found in some of the creeks, and a peculiar kind of a horned frog. There are two kinds of snakes, which the natives called Bersoiok and Nguus, both somewhat venomous. There is abundance of good pasture for horses and cattle. Goats are plentiful, probably introduced by the early Malayan settlers.

The Spanish have done next to nothing to show their occupation, and everything goes on much as before. There is no Spanish garrison. The country is well worth opening up to honest and energetic trade.

Strategy in the Ranks.

Captain J. W. Pratt has told a mighty military story that came to him somehow from the big camp of the United States volunteers at San Francisco. An infantryman had overstayed his liberty. Detection meant a fine and perhaps some imprisonment, with the most disagreeable sort of police duty. The infantry chap was a genius. He pinned strips of white paper down the legs of his trousers. Then he made officer's shoulder straps out of banana skins. Then he boldly walked right through the line, answered "officer," and accepted the night honor of the sentry.—Pacific Commercial Advertiser.

New South Wales Losing Its Population.

The population of New South Wales continues to decline, the inhabitants on March 31 last being 1,170,934, against 1,176,248 at the beginning of the year. There was thus a loss of 5314, though the natural increase was 2292. The loss was mainly attributable to emigration, 7606 more persons having left the colony than entered it. The majority of those who left were men.

The Old Bookkeeper at Lunch.

"The habits that use doth breed."